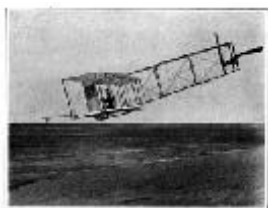


FACTS & FEATURES



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*** Special Edition ***



First Flight Centennial

On a windswept dune along North Carolina's Outer Banks on Dec. 17, 1903, a dream of the ages became reality as the Wright brothers made the world's first powered flight. With Orville at the controls and Wilbur on the ground, the plane made four flights that day, with the longest one covering 852 feet in 59 seconds — an average speed of 31 miles an hour. To commemorate the centennial of this momentous event in aviation history, the Census Bureau today presents facts and figures on air transportation.

Where it All Began



3,171

Estimated population of Kitty Hawk, N.C., in 2002. Kitty Hawk was the site of the Wright brothers' first flight. According to the 1900 census, the latest taken at the time of the first flight, there were 4,757 people living in Dare County, where Kitty Hawk is located (in 2002, Dare County's population was more

than 32,000).

[<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/001118.html>](http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/001118.html)

[<http://www.census.gov/population/cencounts/nc190090.txt>](http://www.census.gov/population/cencounts/nc190090.txt)

[<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/000927.html>](http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/000927.html)



Today's Crowded Skies

612,000

Number of licensed airplane pilots. Among these —

- 244,000 have private pilot's licenses.
- 121,000 are licensed to fly commercial aircraft.

- 145,000 are licensed to fly air transport planes.
- 34,000 are women.
- 87,000 are student pilots.

(Source: soon-to-be-released *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2003*.)

\$107 billion

Annual operating revenue for the U.S. airline industry.

(Source: soon-to-be-released *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2003*.)

128,000

Number of jobs generated in 2001 by air transportation support services, such as air traffic control and other airport operations.

<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/business_ownership/000926.html>

129,000

Number of people employed as airplane pilots and navigators.

(Source: soon-to-be-released *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2003*.)

126,000

Number of aircraft engine mechanics — the people who keep the planes running.

(Source: soon-to-be-released *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2003*.)

19,000

Number of airports across the country. The majority of them (nearly 14,000) are private.

(Source: soon-to-be-released *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2003*.)

218,000

Number of general aviation (private) aircraft. In addition, there are 7,900 airliners.

(Source: soon-to-be-released *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2003*.)

4,138

The total number of aircraft available for public use (i.e., federal, state or local government-owned or leased aircraft).

<http://www.bts.gov/publications/national_transportation_statistics/2002/html/table_general_aviation_pr>

ofile.html>

9 million

Number of aircraft departures for the U.S. airline industry every year.

(Source: soon-to-be-released *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2003*.)

86

Percentage of flights that departed from the nation's airports on time during the fourth quarter of 2002.

Eighty-three percent arrived on time.

(Source: soon-to-be-released *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2003*.)

612 million

Number of paying passengers U.S. airlines carry annually. These air travelers fly an average of 1,046 miles per trip. (Source: soon-to-be-released *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2003*.)

35 million

Number of passengers who used Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport in 2002, making it the nation's busiest. (Source: soon-to-be-released *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2003*.)

3.2 million

Number of passengers who fly between New York and Fort Lauderdale annually, making this route the nation's busiest. (Source: soon-to-be-released *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2003*.)



Aerospace and Air Transportation Industries

449,000

The number of people employed in the aerospace product and parts manufacturing industry in 2001. These employees worked out of 1,792 establishments.

<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/business_ownership/000

926.html>

90,000

Number of people employed as aerospace engineers.

(Source: soon-to-be-released *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2003*.)

\$135 billion

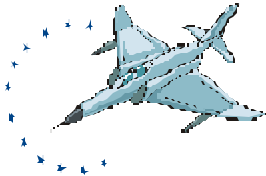
Total value of shipments in 2001 of manufactured aerospace products and parts.

<<http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/m01as-1.pdf>>

609,000

Number of people employed in the air transportation industry in 2001. These employees worked out of 5,451 establishments.

<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/business_ownership/000926.html>



Aeronautical Records

24,987

Length in miles of the longest nonstop, unrefueled flight in history (by Richard Rutan and Jeana Yeager in the experimental, home-built aircraft Voyager in 1986). This marked the first time the world was ever circumnavigated non-stop by air. (Courtesy of the National Aeronautic Association.)

2,193 mph

The speed record (measured in ground speed), set in 1976 by Capt. Eldon W. Joersz of the U.S. Air Force. (Courtesy of the National Aeronautic Association.)

314,750

The highest altitude, in feet, ever reached by an aircraft. The record was set in 1962 by Maj. Robert White of the U.S. Air Force in a high-performance research aircraft. (Courtesy of the National Aeronautic Association.)

From time to time, special editions of the U.S. Census Bureau's *Facts for Features* are issued to commemorate anniversaries or observances or to provide background information for topics in the news. Below is a listing of previous such editions:

U.S. Armed Forces and Veterans (April 10, 2003)

Tax Time (April 11, 2003)

Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial (May 12, 2003)

Dialing for Dollars (Sept. 24, 2003)

Anniversary of Washington, D.C., as Nation's
Capital (Dec. 1, 2003)

Editor's note: Some of the preceding data were collected in surveys and, therefore, are subject to sampling error. Questions or comments should be directed to the Census Bureau's Public Information Office: telephone: (301) 763-3030; fax: (301) 457-3670; or e-mail: <pio@census.gov>.